

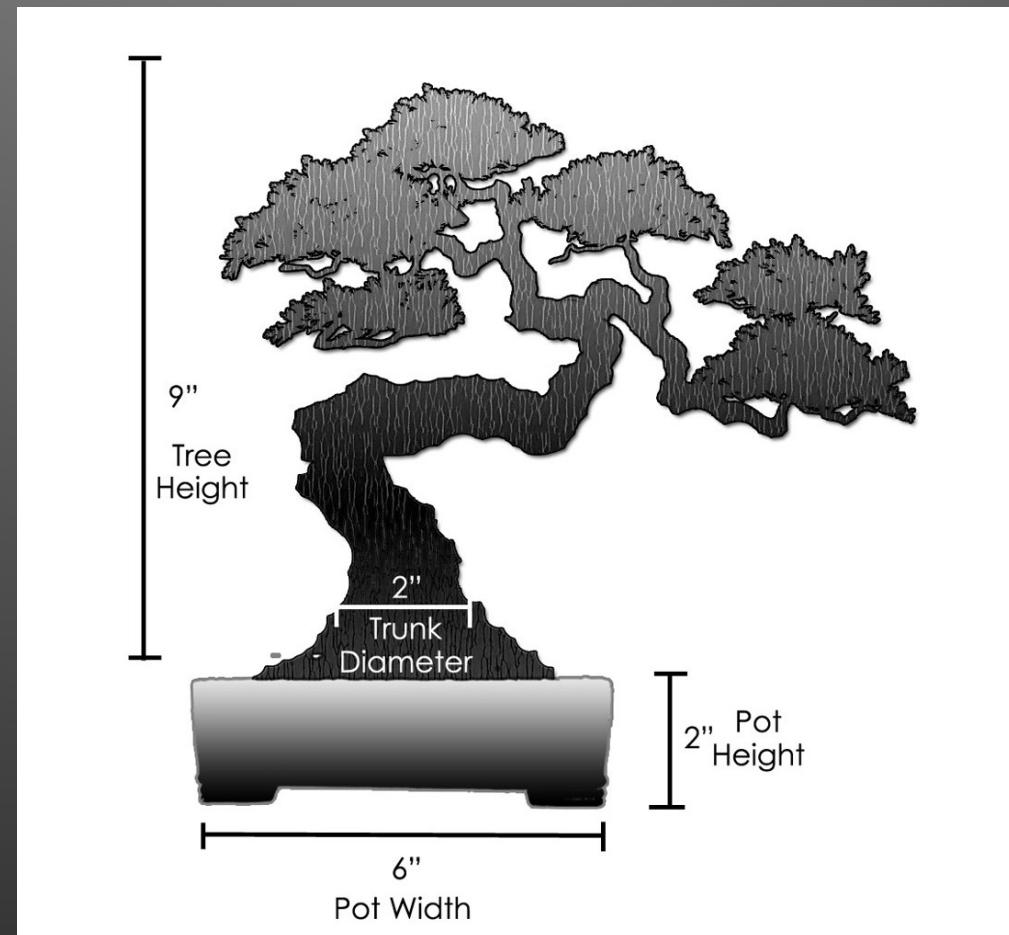
Pot Selection Guidelines

By Carmen Scott and Renee Seely

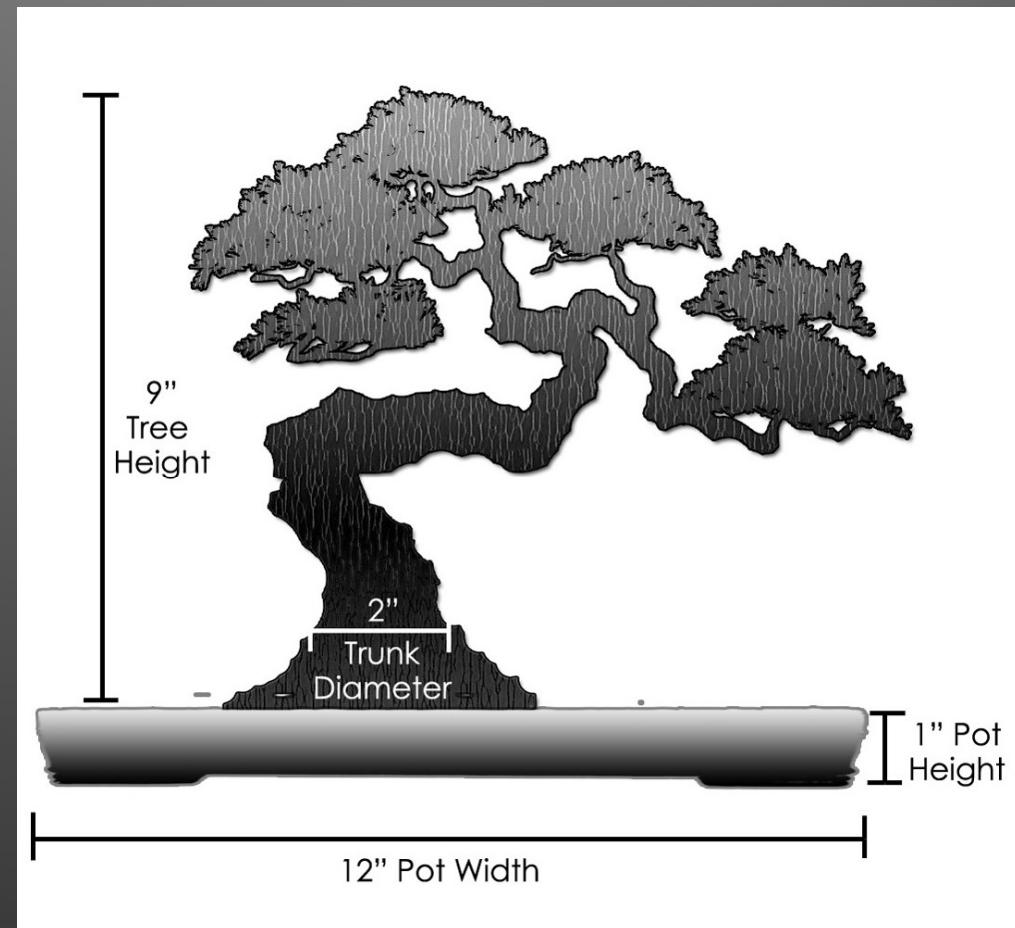
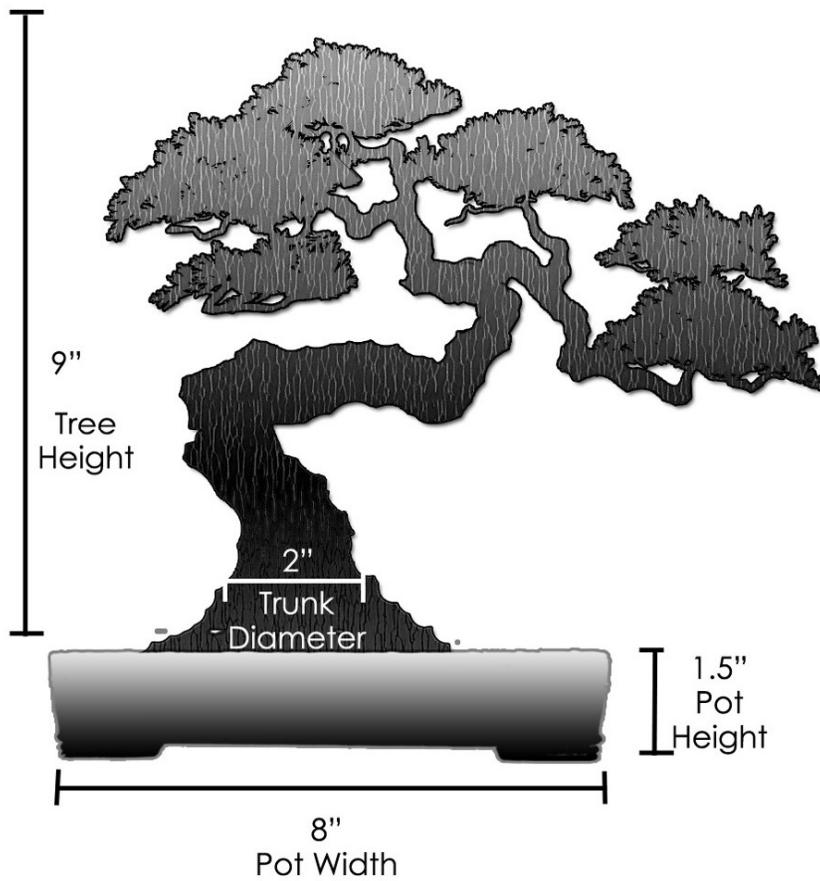
Based on Outline by Bob Bugay

Pot Dimensions

- ▶ Pot width should equal 2/3 the tree's height.
- ▶ Pot height should equal the diameter of the trunk on a mature bonsai.
- ▶ Pot depth should be slightly narrower than the tree's canopy



Break the rule!



Creating a Unified Composition



Glazed vs Unglazed Pots



Unglazed Pots:

1. Conifers typically get potted in unglazed containers
2. Most every tree may be potted in an unglazed container.



Glazed Pots:

1. Glazed containers may be used to accent a particular tree for foliage, fruit, flowers, or bark. Mostly used for broadleaf evergreen and deciduous trees.



Glazed Pots:

2. Color can be used in a contrasting way or a harmonizing way. The difference will be in the feeling or mood that your tree will present.



3. White or Cream colored pots will work with most fruiting, flowering, deciduous trees.



4. Dark colors can be used with bonsai that exhibit “strong character” (massive nebari in proportion to height, or formal upright).
5. Blue pots enhance azaleas, quince, maples or any plant with light colored leaves or flowers, or trees with red fall color or berries. Avoid putting plants with blue flowers in blue pots.



6. Green pots can be problematic as they may not complement the green foliage

7. Yellowish colored pots can also be problematic so are generally used for fall scenes and trees that turn golden-yellow or red.



Basic Pot Shapes

Rectangular pots:
Used for strong
imposing masculine
trees, formal or
informal upright
style.

Trees with massive
trunks, jin and
shari, normally
conifers.



Oval Pots:

Used for softer more feminine type trees.
Shallow oval glazed pots are used for group plantings.

Broom style is also recommended for oval but may look better in a round pot.

Delicate, intricate pots are best with twiggy trees like apricots, pistachios, plums and dwarf citrus.

Windswept or slanting style trees are often planted in oval pots.



Round pots:

Round unglazed “drum” style pots are for bunjin style conifers.

Round glazed pots are also suggested for bunjin style fruiting, flowering deciduous trees.



Cascade Pots:

Can be round, square, hexagonal.

The pot should be taller than its width across.

The height of the pot should be greater or less than the length of the cascade, not the same.



The Deep End of the Pool!

We need to dive into the details of pot design
to enhance the aesthetic of our bonsai.

Spend some time evaluating your tree. What style is your tree? Formal Upright, Informal Upright, Slanting, or Cascade. Other types of plantings may include group or raft styles, bunjin, root over rock, etc. Look at your tree in terms of contrasting elements: is it Masculine or Feminine; Delicate and Light or Strong and Heavy.

What colors are there on your tree and do they change during the year. Colors in the tree can appear in the foliage, the bark of the tree, and the flowers and fruits. Lastly, does your tree project any certain kind of feeling which can be expressed in the feel of the pot.



Blue Rectangle Cut Corners



Unglazed Tan Rectangle with Ribs



Glazed Cream Rectangle with Lip



Oval Brown with Mid Rib





Flowering Plum



Blue Glazed Rectangle with Mid-Rib



Olive Green Glazed Oval



Blue Green Soft Rectangle



Lt Green Oval Bag Pot



1



2



3



4



Princess Persimmon



Blue Glazed Round Flared



Round Unglazed Rust



Round Glazed Green Ribbed



Round Glazed Multicolor



1



2



3



4



Literati California Juniper



Round Brown with Mid Rib



Round Unglazed Nanban



Round Unglazed Tan Flared



Round Reddish Drum



1



2



3



4



Scotts Pine



Unglazed Brown Scalloped Corners



Unglazed Tan Rectangle



Unglazed Rectangle with Lip



Unglazed Oval with Mid Ribs



1



2



3



4



Conclusion

- ▶ These guidelines are not cast in stone and are frequently broken as the situation demands! They are an analysis of what “works” and what “doesn’t”.
- ▶ Because of the number of combinations available in both pots and trees, the actual choices can be infinite.
- ▶ Keeping in mind that all rules seem to get broken, there are some guidelines and thoughts to help in choosing.